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NEWS

CIVICO Seeks Permits for Waterfield Development

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

August 6, 2023 . 6:27 PM — 4 min read

By Rich Rohan

The Waterfield Lot development moves into the next phase on Au
7:30 PM when the Planning Board opens a public hearing on the
submitted by the developer, CIVICO. The Winchester Master Plan had

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identified the Waterfield lot adjacent to the Winchester Center commuter rail station as an possible location for affordable housing. The town-owned parcel has been the subject of a Request for Proposals (RFP) by the town for the development of affordable housing. A proposal by CIVICO for 60 mixed-income rental units was chosen by the Select Board and an initial agreement with the developer was ratified by Spring 2021Town Meeting (118 Yes to 46 No). However, a citizen's petition collected sufficient signatures to call a special election in which the vote of the Spring 2021 Town Meeting was overturned. 49% of the voters (2,614) voted yes to support the proposal at the Spring 2021 Town Meeting vote, while 51% (2,681) voted No. This was 32% voter turnout.

Following the rejection of the initial agreement by the voters, the Select Board appointed a task force to study the competing interests (housing, parking, and design) for the Waterfield site. This task force voted 3-2 to recommend that the Select Board terminate further negotiations with CIVICO and reissue the RFP. However, the Select Board voted unanimously to continue negotiations with CIVICO guided by suggestions that the task force had issued separately and which the task force had agreed on unanimously. These negotiations resulted in a new Land Development Agreement (LDA) with CIVICO which was ultimately ratified by a Special Town Meeting in June 2022. Finally, on June 6 of this year CIVICO submitted a petition for Special Permit for a Planned Unit Development (PUD) in the Central Business District (CBD) and for Site Plan and Design Review. When Town Meeting created the CBD in 2015 it designated the Planning Board, rather than the Zoning Board of Appeals, as the Special Permit Granting Authority (SPGA) in the CBD and so the Planning Board will be conducting a series of hearings on the Special Permit and Site Plan Review request.

At its July 25 2023 meeting, Planning Board Chair Diab Jerius outlined the process going forward. "I think that there's at least three or four [illegible] on this project so we're definitely going to be talking about design. We're

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going to be talking about storm water. We're going to be talking about traffic. Traffic we know it's a big issue with the downtown." Additionally, he stated, "[The developer is] looking to get their permit through by October. I don't know if that's possible. We are starting a little later than I think anyone had hoped."

One of the Planning Board's first tasks is to select outside consultants to assist the board in evaluating the proposal. Assistant Town Engineer Bryan Manter confirmed that the town's consultant of choice for storm water management is Weston and Sampson, and Toole for traffic. With regards to Toole, Jerius stated, "They're very familiar with the downtown. They've done several studies already so financially for the town it makes sense to go with someone who already knows things and again this is not to design, this is simply to review." Additionally, the Planning Board is hiring former Town Planner Brian Szekely for a few hours a week to review the permit application to ensure that it is complete.

The choice of a consultant to review the design garnered more discussion. Jerius suggested that the board members, "Get a list of firms to reach out to and then we could see who responds.

We want someone who does have urban design who has worked on urban design and large projects. This is a big 60-unit project." Nick Rossettos expressed an interest in hiring "someone also who has some historical sensitivities" and I-Ching Scott assured him that anyone working in the Boston area would need to confront this.

The first public hearing on the Waterfield Lot/CIVICO development is scheduled for 7:30 to 8:20 PM on Tuesday, August 8. Participation is remote only but WinCAM.org typically live streams and also records Planning Board meetings for on demand viewing. The Planning Board has a page on the town website for documents related to the permitt process (https://www.winchester.us/1091/WaterfieldCivico-Project).

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In a related action, at their July 31 meeting the Select Board unanimously voted to grant CIVICO's request for an extension of the due diligence period to December 1.

Disclosures: The author is a precinct 2 Town Meeting Member and voted against the original Land Development Agreement at Spring 2021 Town Meeting. He was also a signatory of the referendum petition and voted in favor of the revised LDA at the June 2022 Special Town Meeting.

External sites:

Planning Board Agenda for August 8, 2023 https://winchester.us/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/_08082023-5035

About CIVICO Development https://www.civicodevelopment.com/about

Waterfield Background Memo https://winchester.us/DocumentCenter/View/8106/Waterfield-Background-Memo

Waterfield/CIVICO Project (contains documents pertaining to the current permit process by the Planning Board) https://winchester.us/1091/WaterfieldCivico-Project

Waterfield/CIVICO Project (contains documents pertaining to the initial RFP and LDAs by the Select Board) https://www.winchester.us/919/Waterfield-Lot-Development

Video recording of Planning Board Meeting 7-25-2023 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UYSjgYyxJI4

Video recording of Select Board Meeting 7-31-2023

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cmvg2QBGVuA&t=9s

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Winchester School Committee candidates bring contrasting backgrounds to Thursday forum

Two candidates for Winchester's School Committee will face voters at a forum as the district navigates a new literacy curriculum, budget pressures and questions about student mental health. Heather von Mering and John Bellaire are competing for an open seat on the School Committee, which oversees a budget von

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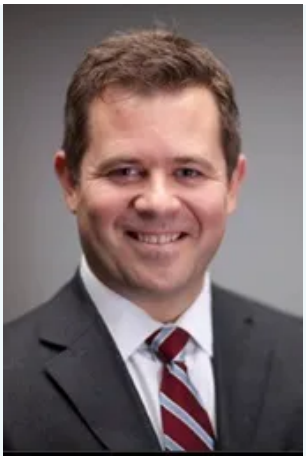
March 4, 2026



NEWS

Rep. Michael Day helps House colleagues pass sweeping energy affordability bill

The following was submitted by the Office of Rep. Michael S. Day: Rep. Michael S. Day and his colleagues in the House of Representatives recently passed energy affordability legislation that would result in over $9 billion in savings for utility ratepayers over the next 10 years. The bill maintains critical

March 4, 2026

NEWS

Winchester gun owners face new training rules starting April 2

Public safety data How Winchester compares on firearms licenses in comparable Massachusetts communities Active licenses as of Jan. 25, 2025 — Source: Massachusetts Criminal History Systems Board License to carry firearms Firearms identification card Winchester and Marblehead are the focus communities. Peers selected based on comparable population size, demographics and suburban

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NEWS

Sen. Jason Lewis, Mass. Senate strengthen fair housing protections for renters, buyers

The following was submitted by the Office of Sen. Jason Lewis: State Sen. Jason Lewis joined his colleagues in the Massachusetts Senate to pass legislation that protects residents from discrimination in the housing market as the Trump administration abandons its enforcement of the federal Fair Housing Act. Illegal discrimination continues

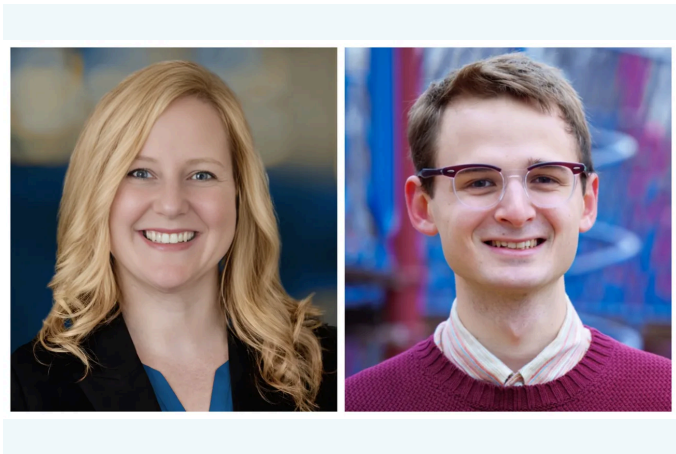
March 3, 2026

Latest

EVENTS

Celebrate Women's History Month with Girls Leading Change

The following was submitted by the Network for Social Justice: To mark Women's History Month and International Women's Day in 2026, the Network for Social Justice is collaborating with club leaders from Winchester High School and members of the Community Health team from La Colaborativa in Chelsea and



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FEATURES

‘Chicago: Teen Edition’ dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents “Chicago: Teen Edition,” a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. This iconic production is set in the 1920s. Performances will take place on March 13 and 14

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March 4, 2026

EVENTS

Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents ‘Syldason: You Are Welcome Here’

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

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